

ABSTRACT

A mobile customer service station operating within a wireless multi-hop communication network includes a console on a wheeled chassis. The console carries and houses a number of components which are used in merchandising operations to conclude customer purchase transactions. The items supported externally on the console are a printer for printing purchase receipts, customer credit charge agreements and records of transactions, and a magnetic card reader for reading information from a magnetic stripe of a customer's credit card. In one embodiment, the operation of the printer, credit card reader and the cash drawer is controlled by a multi-function control unit located within an enclosure of the console. The control unit is electrically powered by a self-contained power source which is preferably a deep cycle rechargeable battery. The console also houses a transceiver unit which under the control of the control unit is capable of interactive communication with a premises network. In another embodiment, the mobile service station comprises an access device which participates with a variety of peripherals at the station in a lower power communication LAN, while providing higher power communication to other network devices via a premises network with routing via a wireless spanning tree configuration.